

The Times' Daily Short Story.

A SEXTON'S HABIT

[Original.]
Old Pollock, sexton of St. James' church, and his wife were childless. Mrs. Pollock pined because she had not a girl to keep her company and Pollock shared in her wish.

Pollock had a habit of stepping to his door every night before going to bed to take a look at his church, not that he expected to see anything unusual—it was a mere matter of habit. His wife told him that it was a habit and begged him to break it up. He gathered his resolution for an effort to do so.

This effort took place one night in November. At 10 o'clock Pollock put out the lights in the house and went to bed. This was only the beginning of it. No sleep came to him, and he tossed about struggling with a desire to get up, go to the door and look at the church, after which he knew he would go back to bed and to sleep. It was near 2 o'clock in the morning before he gave way; then, rising, he went to the door, opened it, looked at the church and was about to turn when he saw or thought he saw a flash of light at one of the windows.

Putting on his clothes and taking his lantern and the key to a door opening into the vestry, he hurried over to the gloomy pile, now dark within, though lighted dimly without by a waning moon. Opening the door, he entered and, passing through an arch, stood on the chancel steps with his lantern behind him, that it might not interfere with his vision, and peered at the pews, aisles, nave—indeed, at those things with peculiar names that go to make up the interior of a church.

Seen at that hour, by the faintest glimmer of moonlight shining through the windows, nothing could have been more uninviting. Even a sexton may have feeling, and old Pollock, although he had seen the sight many times before, remarked to himself that he would rather be opening a grave by daylight than standing there gazing over a sea of emptiness. But, not seeing anything unusual, he was about to take his departure when he heard a fumbling at the great front door lock. Not wishing to be seen, he blew out his light and got into one of the choir pews, where he could watch any one entering the church.

Sure enough, the big door opened and some one came in. Then came the scratch and flash of a match and the lighting of a candle. By its faint flame Pollock saw a man enter the church, leading a shivering girl up the center aisle, who shuddered at every step. The pair came nearly to the chancel, where the man waited, listening for a sound, while the girl sat in a front pew, her face buried in her hands. They were evidently expecting to meet some one.

Then the clock in the tower struck 2. A moment later Pollock saw a light moving in the guild rooms, and present-

ly a man dressed in the vestments of a clergyman came in holding in his hand a small lamp. The man before the chancel met him at the rail and whispered something to him. Then he turned to the girl.

"Grace, dear," he said, "this is the Rev. Mr. Hartshorne, rector of this church. He will marry us."

From this moment Pollock saw through what was on foot as well as if he were intimately acquainted with the parties. He had served as sexton with Dr. Hartshorne for twenty years and knew full well that the man before him was not Dr. Hartshorne. A young girl was about to be ruined by a mock marriage.

But what was he to do? He was an old man incapable of overcoming these two rascals and did not think that to appear and accuse them would be of any avail. At any rate he did not dare try it for fear of bodily injury. The girl was almost dragged to the altar. There was light enough for Pollock to see that the man was well dressed while the girl was in the garb of the poorer classes. The mock clergyman began the service and had reached the words, "Grace, will you have this man?"—when Pollock gave a groan that echoed through the church with all the despair of one suffering from melancholia insanity.

The groom and the mock clergyman looked at each other with startled faces. The bride had to be supported.

"Go on," said the groom under his teeth with an oath, and, after considerable urging, the service proceeded.

"Do you, Grace, have this man?"

There was another groan, this time down in the body of the church, for Pollock had slipped around by a side passage and got in among the pews. The pretended clergyman dropped his book.

"You'll burn for this!" came a voice from a still different direction.

By this time the groom had lost his nerve as well as the clergyman and, picking up the bride, who had fainted, hurried down the aisle with her.

"Drop her!" roared a sepulchral voice.

The girl was dropped in the aisle and the men frantically made for the door. Pollock, fearing they might gather courage to return, picked up the girl and carried her out of the vestry door and to his house.

Lena Bruce remained with the old couple till they died, they believing that Providence had caused the sexton to take his resolution on that very night and break it after midnight for the purpose of saving the girl and giving them a daughter. Lena, who was a good Christian, only yielded to the villain's solicitation to a clandestine marriage on his promise to take her to a church. No church was available except at an hour when all the world was asleep. But how they got the keys old Pollock never knew. He did not again think of going to bed without his last look at his charge and often got up in the night to do so.

BELLE ATWOOD.

CONDITION OF TRADE

Demoralization in Stocks Does Not Affect Legitimate Business.

RAILWAY EARNINGS HEAVY

Despite the Fall of \$31 in Sixty Most Active Shares—General Situation as Good as Last Year.

New York, Aug. 8.—R. G. Dun & Co.'s review of trade says:

It has been an eventful week in the stock market, more failures occurring, while prices fell to the lowest point since January, 1901. Yet there has been no corresponding demoralization in trade or industry. From an average of \$110.27 last September the sixty active railway shares have fallen about \$31, and it is not surprising that a few concerns have found it impossible to meet their obligations. Considering the great shrinkage in market value of securities it is evidence of solidity in the business world that suspensions are not more numerous, and most of those thus far reported were due to pool operations in specialties rather than general weakness. Trade advices from nearly every section continue to show as favorable conditions as a year ago, and in many lines the volume of transactions has increased. Jobbers report full business opening with excellent prospects, and manufacturing plants are well occupied, with the exception of cotton mills.

Railway Earnings Heavy.

Distribution of merchandise is so heavy that railway equipment already proves inadequate, although crops are not the factor that they will be in a few weeks. Earnings for July exceeded last year's by 12.7 per cent and those of 1901 by 20.2 per cent. On the whole, news from the farms is less favorable, but no serious curtailment is assured, and many sections make very bright reports. A decline of 1.5 per cent in the cost of commodities during July is evidence that prices are less inflated, since the change was mainly in meats and other food which have been ruling at an abnormal position. Foreign commerce for the last week at this port shows gains of \$1,642,278 in imports and \$2,335,188 in exports, as compared with the same week last year. Bank exchanges at New York were 9.1 per cent smaller than last year and 6.1 per cent less than in 1901, but at other leading cities there were gains of 4.5 and 11.4 per cent respectively.

Consumption of iron and steel is on a large scale and in many departments the past week has witnessed the signing of numerous contracts, but there is a tendency to delay purchases beyond early needs. This conservatism is not surprising in view of the uncertainty regarding the security and financial markets, together with considerable interruption to structural work through labor controversies.

Wheat Stronger.

Wheat has developed strength through small receipts at primary markets, which aggregated only 3,550,951 bushels, against 6,910,955 bushels a year ago. Foreign crop reports are less satisfactory, which gave further support to quotations that already ruled about 10 cents higher than at this time last year. While the corn movement is heavier than a year ago it does not show the wide margin that was seen earlier in the season. Receipts amounted to 1,967,504 bushels, against 1,612,645, and Atlantic coast exports of 316,416 bushels compared with 63,812 a year ago. Shipments of wheat, flour included, from all ports of the United States were 2,690,532 bushels, against 3,076,039 bushels a year ago.

Insolvency returns for the month of July appear ominous when considered in the aggregate, especially if comparison is made with previous months or the corresponding month in preceding years. Liabilities of all bankrupt concerns reached the exceptionally high sum of \$16,751,245, far exceeding any other July for a decade. The average for the nine years immediately preceding was about \$9,000,000. Of course a large share of the month's defaulted liabilities was provided by a few large brokerage suspensions, but there was also a building concern that failed for a considerable amount, and twenty-two firms defaulted for over \$100,000 each, supplying 10,911,304, or two-thirds of the total losses for the 915 failures. Aside from the merely speculative disasters, it is evident that the midsummer industrial house cleaning revealed many weak spots.

Candidates Exchange Shots.

Memphis, Tenn., Aug. 8.—Sheriff L. W. Williamson of De Soto county, Miss., was brought to this city for medical attention, having been shot and probably mortally wounded at Hernando, Miss., in a pistol fight with County Surveyor W. H. Moody of De Soto county. Williamson and Moody were candidates for the county clerkship and it is stated that the difficulty grew out of campaign differences. Moody surrendered.

Battle Between French and Moors.

Madrid, Aug. 8.—According to a dispatch to the Imparcial from Melilla, Morocco, a fight has taken place between French and Moorish troops near the village of Beni-Fatt. The Moors, who were pursuing a body of Kabyle insurgents, entered French territory in spite of the protests of the French frontier post, and a conflict ensued. Three French and two Moorish soldiers were killed and a number were wounded.

COLLEGE BOYS IN KANSAS.

The Experience of One of These Student Harvesters.

One of the college boys who went to the western Kansas harvest fields writes to a friend, says the Kansas City Journal, an account of his experiences, saying:

"Well, this isn't what it is cracked up to be, and Harold would have confessed himself all in and come home to mamma inside of two days after starting if he hadn't been worse afraid of the joshing of you devils than of blistered paws. Speaking of blistered paws, it's no joke. Before night the first day I had puffs all over my hands, and that night the fat dame of this household stuck needles into 'em and tapped me until I ran water like a hydrant. But the old boy was good to me, and for two days he kept me at choring around, hauling water, helping the fat dame cook and playing the baby generally. Then I tackled the header boxes again for ten straight days, and I really got to liking it. But say, Willie, don't you believe that story about a shortage in the world's bread crop. I know better, for I pitched enough of the blamed stuff to make two crops of world's breadstuffs."

"And, Willie, there is another thing you can disabuse your fostering intellect of. You can't spon on with these country girls with the joyous freedom that you read about. We have a roly poly girl here who doesn't wear corsets and who don't care how much sock she displays when she kicks at the cat. I kissed her the other night. I won't do it any more. If I want exercise of a rapid kind I will go out and ground an electric light wire through my handsome person. She whacked me on the side of the head with a fist like a ham, and don't you doubt it, Willie, she meant every word of it."

"I got \$2 a day and 'found.' 'Found' means that the old man comes to your downy couch at 3 in the morning and, finding you asleep, whips you out to feed the horses. By the time the horses are fed we are called to breakfast. After breakfast we lie us away to the field and cut wheat until the fat dame waves a tablecloth out of the window to tell us that dinner is ready. Then we eat and go out and cut more wheat, and the old boy keeps us at it until it gets too dark to see."

"I figure that I will get home with about \$30 to the clear. The old boy says he will give me \$25 a month to stay and plow, and a thrasher man offers \$1.50 a day and 'found' if I will work for him. But \$30 is capital enough for Harold. I am not grasping or sordid."

"P. S.—I had a heart to heart talk with the roly poly girl last evening. She said I ought to be ashamed of myself for kissing her in the house where the fat dame might see. If it wasn't for school taking up I believe I'd tackle that job of plowing."

NEW MODEL RIFLE.

Uncle Sam's Regulars to Have a Gun That Shoots Five Miles.

A five mile range is claimed for the new model Springfield army rifle, which will be the deadliest small arm yet designed in the United States or Europe, says the New York World. The Krag-Jorgensen, or United States magazine rifle, with which the regulars were equipped in the Spanish war and which at that time was regarded faultless, is, according to recent tests, but a mere toy as compared with the new weapon.

The demonstrated advantages of the new rifle as compared with the Krag-Jorgensen, which many experts consider equal or superior to the small arm in use in any European army, are decreased weight, greater velocity, greater penetration and an improved sight.

A special cartridge which has been designed for use in riots has a comparatively small range, so as to obviate danger to innocent persons who may be a mile or two distant from the disturbance. Round shot are substituted in this cartridge for the penetrating steel bullet used in an enemy's country.

Latest Styles in Purse.

The newest purses are of pigskin and come in several sizes, says the New York American. They are made of an oblong strip of leather folded in the middle and a semicircular piece cut out of each end to form a handle. When the strip is opened there appear a purse, a card case, a bill fold and a tiny pocket in which to slip a handkerchief. Handbags grow larger and more expensive all the time. Long grain morocco is used for the handsomest of them, in blue, green, red and tan as well as black. They fasten very securely, and there is a bag which looks like a travelling bag. This is designed to carry jewels in. Many of the costly bags are fitted with silver and gold mounted purse, card case and salts bottle, each in its own pocket.

A Society for Lunatics Only.

Professor Jabez Burks, a veterinary surgeon of Pottsville, Pa., is organizing a society for lunatics which, it is believed, will be the first organization of the kind in the country, says the Chicago Record-Herald. No members will be admitted until a committee on qualifications has first passed on their lunacy.

Plan to Make Faces Mosquito Proof.

Barbers at Rehoboth, Del., have hit upon a novel plan to protect their patrons from mosquitoes, says the Philadelphia Press. With every shave the customer's face is made mosquito proof, with no extra charge. Faces of the customers are anointed with a volatile oil which is abhorrent to mosquitoes.

Baltimore's New Pier.

Baltimore is to have a shiploading pier 933 feet long and 52 feet wide with four tracks.

REVOLT IN MACEDONIA

Conflicting Reports of Situation in Monastir District.

WILL NOT USE ALBANIANS.

Turkey Fears Excesses if These Undisciplined Troops Are Employed—Regulars Will Try to Crush Insurrection.

Constantinople, Aug. 8.—News received here as to the extent of the Bulgarian revolutionary movement in the vilayet of Monastir is conflicting. In consular dispatches from Monastir the opinion is expressed that the insurrection broke out a fortnight earlier than its chiefs intended and before the hands were in readiness, presumably because the leaders were disconcerted by the active preventive measures adopted by the authorities.

The Bulgarian inhabitants in a number of villages have fled to the mountains for refuge. The railways have asked that the troops guarding the lines be quadrupled.

This would entail the employment of 20,000 soldiers, and in view of the impoverished treasury the government will find it difficult to comply with the request.

In spite of reports to the contrary it is confidently believed in well informed quarters that the porte, in conformity with its formal declarations, will employ only regular troops to suppress the insurrection, as it is well aware how important it is for Turkey to avoid excesses such as certainly would be the outcome of the employment of the undisciplined Albanians or other irregular soldiery. The diplomats here entertain no doubt that the porte will continue its present policy in fighting the bands with regulars.

Disposition of Troops.

Of the eight battalions of infantry despatched to Monastir four will remain at Monastir, three will occupy the heights of Peristeri, to the westward of Monastir, and one will go to Florina, a town of 11,000 inhabitants, seventeen miles southwest of Monastir.

The porte has sent categorical instructions to the valls of the Armenian provinces of Asia Minor, holding them

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personally responsible for any Kurdish excesses and ordering vigorous measures to be taken to prevent fighting.

The British vice consul at Bitlis has been ordered to proceed to Mus, eighty miles south of Erzerum, where the Armenian massacres by the Kurds and Turks occurred in 1894, to investigate the situation there. A consular dispatch from Erzerum received here this morning says the excitement in that district is quieting down, but that the vail of Erzerum reports that 600 armed Hittichakists from Russian territory have compelled the Armenians in the villages of Saesun vilayet (also the scene of Armenian massacres in 1894) to take refuge in the mountains.

The vail has sent four battalions of troops against the Hittichakists who escaped to the mountains. The porte has communicated this information to the Russian embassy, calling attention to the fact that the bands came from Russian territory.

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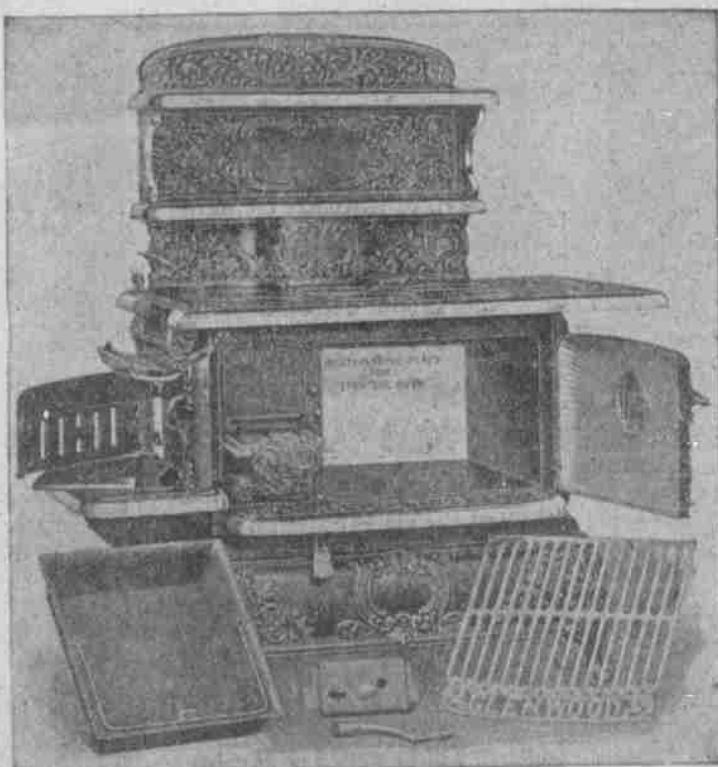
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